6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Ranching and farming are the major economic pursuits of the people of these counties. The northern and western portions contain excellent natural grazing areas and are extensively used by both residents and outsiders for grazing of beef cattle, sheep, and horses. The eastern third of Glacier county and the greater portion of Pondera are subject to lesser amounts of rainfall than the more westerly portions but have more frost free days, and have been utilized to a greater extent for both dry and irrigation farming. Principal crops are wheat, barley, and hay.

Oil and natural gas production and refining are important industries, with the principal producing fields lying just to the east of the reservation limits. Producing wells on the reservation in both the northeast and southeast corners may be tapping these same fields. Oil is also being pumped in the northwest part of the reservation and there has been revived interest recently in exploring the potential of the western foothill strip. Oil lease money and bonus payments for leasing rights have provided a fluctuating but important prop to the local economy. There has been little manufacturing or lumbering, although the foothill strip, adjoining national forests and Glacier Park, has a lumber potential that is slowly being realized as the tribal mill in Browning increases its lumber output and new wood products industries are being attracted to the reservation.

The population, with an economic base of beef, wool, grain, and hay, also supports businesses, services, schools, churches, and government. Banking and financing institutions are available in Cut Bank, Browning, Conrad and Valier. Dependent children, and also those who are needy, aged, blind, or disabled are provided for by the county public welfare system established by state law and financed by tribal, county, state, and federal funds.

Like the other people of Glacier and Pondera counties the tribal members are citizens of the United States and of the state of Montana. They participate in national and state politics and in the county, precinct, school district, and town governments according to their places of residence. Reservation boundaries, it will be seen, create an added dimension. They overlie the county system but do not obliterate, change, or directly affect it. Democrats, Republicans, independents, and disinterested voters play their respective parts at all levels of politics.

The reservation region is served by the Montana State Public Schools system. County school districts, with one or two exceptions, cross reservation lines. The public schools that have Indian pupils receive federal support under the Federal Impact Area Act (PL 874) (U.S. Statutes LXIV, 1, 1950:1100) and the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934 (U.S. Statutes XLVIII, 1934:596) which in differing ways provide for payments to public schools in lieu of the taxes not received from Indian lands held in trust. Elementary schools, varying greatly in size, plant, and staff, are found in all settled and rural areas, and high schools are located at Browning, Cut Bank, Valier and Conrad.

Religious and other organizations here are similar to those found elsewhere in rural regions of the United States. Many denominations of Christian churches have followers here and each town has one or several churches. Similarly, one or several religious and secular lodges, service clubs, veterans' organizations, youth clubs, ranch, business, trade, and labor organizations are found in the communities of the area.

14: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1960) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

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Education

871 The reservation region is served by the Montana State Public Schools system. County school districts, with one or two exceptions, cross reservation lines. The public schools that have Indian pupils receive Federal support under the Federal Impact Area Act (PL874).[38]
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873 in all settled and rural areas, and high schools are located at Browning,
368 Cut Bank, Valier and Conrad.

Religious and Other Organizations

794 Religious and other organizations here are similar to those found elsewhere in rural regions of the United States and need little discussion. Many denominations of Christian churches have followers
575 here, and each town has one or several churches. Similarly, one or several religious and secular lodges, service clubs, veterans' organizations, youth clubs, ranch, business, trade and labor organizations are found in the communities of the area. The particular organizations active on the reservation will be discussed later.

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[38] U.S., Statutes at Large, 1950, LXIV, Part 1, p. 1100.

Reservation Population Centers

361 The reservation population is widely dispersed. Many families live on their ranches or allotments along the stream valleys or scattered on the broad flats; others live in houses clustered together in towns and hamlets.

[103] The regions of scattered dwellings are named after the rivers or creeks along which they are located--e.g., Two Medicine, Badger Creek, Birch Creek, Milk River--or for rail stations, schools, and historical characteristics--e.g., Meriwether, Seville, Pontrasina, Badger-Fisher and Old Agency.

Browning, the Agency town, and East Glacier, at the eastern entrance to Glacier National Park, have been mentioned already. Other towns are: Babb, Starr School, Blackfoot and Heart Butte.

361 Babb, in the northwestern corner of the reservation, consists
366 of a post office, elementary school, motel, grocery store and several
368 cafeterias and bars. It serves as a tourist stop and community center for the approximately five hundred people who live in the surrounding countryside.

Starr School is a hamlet located seven miles northeast of Browning on Cut Bank Creek. Several houses are grouped around a school, a church, and a community hall, and others are scattered up and down the creek. This is a center of a largely full-blood population of about two hundred people.

Blackfoot is a rail point eight miles east of Browning consisting of a post office, elementary school, railroad section quarters and a few houses.

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368 Heart Butte, in the southern tip of the reservation is another center of full-blood population. An elementary school, Catholic church, combination post office and store, a community hall and scattered houses form the community center for the three to four hundred people living in this part of the reservation. The people go either to Browning, thirty-six miles north, or to Conrad or Valier, off the reservation to the east, for business and shopping requirements.

Little Badger, south of Browning, is another small center of perhaps forty persons, largely full-bloods, who live around an elementary school and community hall. . .

The old Cut Bank Indian Boarding School, on Cut Bank Creek seven miles north of Browning, is now a dormitory for boys and girls of elementary school age. These children are taken by bus to the public schools in Browning.

The Tribe

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473 The Tribe is both a political entity with legislative, judicial and executive powers, and a business corporation. The Corporate Charter of the Blackfeet Tribe establishes the Tribe's sphere of authority over the handling of funds and the use of tribal assets for the benefit of its members. All tribal members are shareholders in the corporation
[643] and have a vote in its affairs. The thirteen members of the Tribal Council direct both the political and business affairs of the Tribe and the Corporation.[46]

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[46] U.S., Office of Indian Affairs, Corporate Charter of the Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation Montana (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1936).

14: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1960) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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School and Children's Activities

177 184 571 There appear to be no large community enterprises that draw crowds of white-oriented people together comparable to the Indian Days Encampment and the Indian dances around which so much Indian-oriented sociability is focused. Perhaps the unbalanced attendance at school and civic meetings--activities involving the children of the community--is most striking and comparable. The limited adult attendance at these events indicates a real social division within the community that can be explained, in part, by the cultural orientations.

177 184 877 School plays, commencement exercises, and the other child and youth activities in Browning invite public support.[174] Children from families of both orientations attend and participate; yet very few of the parents who turn out to watch their children perform are Indian-oriented.

P.T.A. meetings and school commencement exercises were not attended by many Indian-oriented people. No Indian-oriented were seen at two P.T.A. meetings, each attended by from fifty to sixty people.

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[174]The description of these particular events is restricted to those held in Browning because it is the largest and most heterogeneous of the reservation communities. People of both orientations, local people and residents from the other communities come to Browning to attend things that interest them. Attendance at similar affairs in outlying communities reflects the orientation balance of the community. Children's activities at Starr School and Heart Butte, for instance, are attended by more Indian-oriented people; similar events at Babb or East Glacier are attended almost wholly by white-oriented persons. Browning differs in that it has quite large populations of people from both orientations; selective turnout here is more significant.

657 terms of the Agreement. They had traded land for an opportunity
361 to make a living. In 1890 some 1,000 heifers and 25 bulls were
[648] issued to these Indians and additional issues of cattle were made
[231] in subsequent years. In 1893 Agent George Steel stated: "The
[425] Indians are now well scattered out over the reservation on ranches which they have selected, instead of being bunched up in bands as formerly." (Annual Report Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1893, p. 172). By scattered, he of course meant scattered along the river valleys, where, like their ancestors of buffalo days, the Indians' homes were sheltered from the elements in winter, and ready access to firewood and drinking water.

433 The South Piegan were prospering under the new Agreement.
657 By 1896 there were more than 500 different cattle brands on the
● 368 reservation stock book. (Annual Report of the Commissioner of
[231] Indian Affairs, 1896, p. 176). The building of the Great Northern
[175] Railway across the reservation in the early '90s, the opening of the new boarding school on Willow Creek in 1892 and the movement of the Blackfeet Agency to present Browning, north of the railroad in March 1895, further encouraged the development of the northern portion
[361] of the reservation. This movement of settlement was from north to south on the plains, not westward into the mountainous area of the reservation.

600 In his annual Report for the year 1893 Agent George Steell,

464 said, "Yah, I want to work." The man said, "When can you start?" Jim said, "Right now," and handing me the axe he said, "*Sáh-koh-y-nah*, you fix Dad he's lunches." And Jim went to work. Since that time he has been a janitor, a carpenter, a painter, a laborer . . . you name it! He has also done a lot of fire fighting. The Blackfoots, as
● [368] well as the other tribes in this area, are always on call to fight serious forest fires--sometimes they are flown to the scene of a conflagration as distant as Colorado or California--and they are the very best at that work.

Jim seldom if ever quits a job; the work runs out, that's all. And even when unemployed, Jim never spends an idle day. When no other source of income is available, he cuts fenceposts and firewood, hoping that he can find a buyer. I felt a tug at my guts when I discovered the other day that Jim had invested some of his few dollars in a mail order detective course--anything to try to establish himself in some sort of profession. Of course, Jim did not tell me this; I found portions of the course in his room.

427 Jim's real dream is to be able to lease some more land and to build up his own herd of cattle. The grass is fine here, and Jim has a
426 pretty good string of horses, but the winters are hard and long, so Jim needs a pretty substantial loan to winter a herd the first year.
[643] He has tried to get a loan authorized by the Tribal Council, but to no avail. The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which was in great
657 measure beneficial (or at least so intended) to the Indians but
622 which also opened the door to petty political shenanigans on the Reservation, deprived the Chief of any real authority and placed him rather in the position of a contemporary European king. The
[643] Canadian Indians still retain their band chiefs, but on the Piegan Reservation it is the Tribal Council which handles business and political affairs, including the tribal funds and the employment, for
427 whatever purpose, of tribal lands. A great deal of the best Blackfoot
648 grazing land has already been leased to White ranchers, and this is a sore point with the Chief. He continually exhorts the Tribe to uti-
311 lize in their own endeavors more of the Reservation's resources,
185 to raise more cattle of their own. But there are racketeers even
622 among Indians, and the Chief has a lot of opposition. Several years ago, somebody actually took a shot at him. The bullet is still in the living-room wall.

643 Jim did tell me that he ran for Tribal Council but did not make it. Jim is a full-blood, and the Council is controlled by the breeds, the so-called "educated" Indians, and by those Blackfoots who play up to the politicians and to the large land-holding Whites of the region.

Data on the contemporary community are derived from three field periods during these years, five months in all. The historical data are selected from historical sources surveyed in the libraries of Stanford University and the University of California, Santa Barbara.

In the following section, I shall turn to the contemporary setting of the Blood Reserve. It is in this setting that the continuities from the past are manifested, despite the many technological, economic, and socio-cultural differences between the present Blood community and the aboriginal past.

The Contemporary Blood Indian Environment and Community

Today the Blood Indian Band resides on a reservation in the southwest corner of Alberta close to the borders of Montana and British Columbia. The Blood Reserve in the foothills of the Rockies comprises 600 square miles of high rolling prairie and butte country at an altitude of close to 3,500 feet.[3] It is the largest single Indian Reserve in Canada. Its 2,850 inhabitants live either in small communities or scattered out over the prairie between the St. Mary and Belly Rivers.[4] There are three recognized communities on the Reserve: Stand-off, Moses Lake, and Glenwood. Of the three, Stand-off is the largest. It has a school, a general store, two churches, a gas station, and a post office.

BLACKFEET RESERVATION

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TRIBAL ECONOMY

Average annual tribal income is $500,000. Ninety percent of this income is derived from minerals and 10 percent from miscellaneous sources. There are several industrial enterprises on the reservation, including a pencil manufacturer and a lumber cut-stock plant, providing employment for tribal members and income to the tribe.

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CLIMATE

Rainfall averages about 14 inches per year. The temperature ranges from a high of 85° to a low of −20°.

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TRANSPORTATION

U.S. Highway 89 runs southeast-northwest, and U.S. Highway 2 runs east-west through the reservation. Train, bus, and truck services are available on the reservation at Browning, while commercial air service is available at Great Falls, 125 miles away.

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COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A large community building is available at Browning for various tribal activities. A modern library with 3,000 volumes was recently completed. The water system at Browning is municipally owned. Electricity is furnished by Glacier Cooperative and natural gas by Montana Power Company. The U.S. Public Health Service hospital at Browning provides medical care for tribal members.

[366] **Vital Statistics**

[368] Population:
[527] Indians residing on or adjacent to
[529] reservation: 6,216

[162] Labor Force:
Total: 1,353
[464] Unemployed: 495
Unemployment rate: 37%

RECREATION

Browning, gateway to Glacier National Park, is the principal reservation shopping center. This is also the site of the Museum of the Plains Indians, a nationally known repository of Indian artifacts. North American Indian Days are celebrated annually with dances, ceremonies, and a rodeo. In addition to Glacier National Park, reservation recreation areas include Lower St. Mary's Lake, Duck Lake, and other such areas.